

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 00806 080614Z
ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
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INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
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CINCEUR FOR POLAD

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TAGS: PEPR, LY, XI, XJ, XF
SUBJECT: LIBYA HARDENS POSITION ON WESTERN SAHARA

REF: TRIPOLI 0803

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PAGE 02 TRIPOL 00806 080614Z

BEGIN SUMMARY: LIBYA APPEARS TO BE MOVING TOWARDS FORMAL
RECOGNITION OF THE POLISARIO MOVEMENT IN SPITE OF RECENT
ASSURANCES TO MAURITANIAN LEADERS THAT LIBYA WOULD CEASE GIVING
ARMS TO THIS ORGANIZATION. HOPES OF LIBYAN MEDIATION FADE. END
SUMMARY.

1. IN RECENT WEEKS, THE LIBYAN POSITION TOWARDS THE WESTERN

SAHARA HAS HARDENED CONSIDERABLY. NEWS OF POLISARIO "VICTORIES" CONTINUE TO ENJOY PROMINENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT PRESS, AND POLISARIO LEADER MUHAMMAD AL-AMIN'S MEETINGS WITH QADHAFI IN TRIPOLI (MAY 6) AND IN ALGIERS (MAY 31) WERE BOTH REPORTED IN THE CONTEXT OF LIBYA'S SYMPATHIES FOR THE WESTERN SAHARA'S NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS. THE CONGO'S JUNE 3 RECOGNITION OF THE MOVEMENT IS ALSO AN INDICATION OF RENEWED MOVEMENT BY LEFTIST AFRICAN COUNTRIES IN THIS DIRECTION.

2. IN HIS FORTHRIGHT ADDRESS TO THE ALGERIAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY JUNE 3, QADHAFI CAREFULLY TRACED LIBYAN POLICY TOWARDS THE WESTERN SAHARA ISSUE. HE NOTED THAT LIBYA INITIALLY APPLAUDED THE PROSPECT OF THE UNITY OF THE SAHARA WITH MAURITANIA OR MOROCCO FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF THE "FOREIGN COLONIALIST," BUT ADDED QUOTE THE MERE USE OF FORCE IN THIS PROBLEM CONFIRMS THAT THE SAHARA IS IN NO UNITY WITH ITS NEIGHBORS UNQUOTE. QADHAFI ARGUED FOR THE NECESSITY OF SELF-DETERMINATION BY THE SAHARAN PEOPLE AND STRESSED THAT "WHAT IS GOING ON CONFIRMS EVERYDAY TO US AND TO THE WHOLE WORLD AND TO HISTORY THAT THE SAHARANS HAVE NO DESIRE TO JOIN MOROCCO OR ALGERIA OR MAURITANIA."

3. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME QADHAFI DISCUSSED IN SUCH DETAIL MAURITANIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA AND THE REASONS LIBYA OPPOSED THIS INVOLVEMENT. HE SAID LIBYA SYMPATHIZED WITH THE MAURITANIAN PEOPLE BECAUSE OF STRONG LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 TRIPOL 00806 080614Z

"RELIGIOUS AND NATIONALIST REASONS" AND BECAUSE OF A "COMMON DESTINY," AND ADDED THAT "WE WOULD HAVE LIKED THAT NO OBSTACLES PREVENT US GIVING CONSTANT ASSISTANCE TO THE MAURITANIAN PEOPLE." NEVERTHELESS, QADHAFI DECLARED THAT MAURITANIA DID NOT REQUIRE NEW LAND OUTSIDE HER INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED BORDERS BUT INSTEAD NEEDED STABILITY AND TO DEVELOP HER LAND AND TO STRENGTHEN HERSELF. THE ONE INTOLERABLE ASPECT OF THIS ISSUE WHICH "MUST BE OPPOSED" WAS THE INTERVENTION OF ANY NON-ARAB SIDE IN THIS PROBLEM WHICH WAS "A BIG INSULT TO THE ARAB NATION." WITHOUT GIVING FURTHER DETAILS, QADHAFI CONCLUDED THAT THE LIBYAN POSITION ON THE WESTERN SAHARA WAS WELL KNOWN, ENOUGH TIME HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THIS PROBLEM AND THE QUESTION WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO LIBYA'S "POPULAR CONGRESSES" FOR DECISION.

4. COMMENT. QADHAFI'S LENGTHY REMARKS ON THE WESTERN SAHARA WERE UNDOUBTEDLY PRECIPITATED BY THE ACTIVE WESTERN (AND LARGELY FRENCH) MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN THE WESTERN SAHARA, CHAD AND ZAIRE WHICH HE PERCEIVES AS THE SPEARHEAD OF A NEW "IMPERIALIST" THRUST INTO AFRICA WHICH MUST NOW BE RESOLUTELY CONFRONTED BY "PROGRESSIVE" AFRICAN AND ARAB REGIMES. IN SPITE OF ASSURANCES TO MAURITANIAN LEADERS THAT LIBYA WOULD NO LONGER HELP ARM POLISARIO (NOUAKCHOTT 1364 NOTAL) IT NOW SEEMS

CLEAR THAT QADHAFI WILL NOT ASSIST IN ANY PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO
THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM IN THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE OF ACTIVE
FRENCH MILITARY SUPPORT FOR SELECTED AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS.
PRESENTATION OF THIS ISSUE TO THE LIBYAN "POPULAR CONGRESSES"
FOR DECISION MILITATES AGAINST LESS LIBYAN INVOLVEMENT IN
SAHARAN AFFAIRS. CONGRESSES WILL NO DOUBT BE ASKED WHETHER TO
SUPPORT THE NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS OF THE WESTERN SAHARAN PEOPLE
AND THEY WILL OF COURSE WISH TO DO SO. FORMAL RECOGNITION OF
POLISARIO BY LIBYA WILL BE ONLY A SHORT STEP AWAY. CARLE

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